

Guidelines for All Projects



Chapter 4:

Guidelines for All Projects

These design guidelines shall apply to all projects in the Old Town District. These include certain site improvements, alterations to existing structures and new construction.

Accessibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates that places of public accommodation be accessible to all users.

78. The guidelines introduced herein should not prevent or inhibit compliance with accessibility laws.

- All new construction shall comply completely with ADA.
- Owners of historic properties should comply to the fullest extent, while also preserving the integrity of the character-defining features of their buildings.
- Special provisions for historic buildings exist in the law that allow some alternative solutions in meeting the ADA standards.
- Consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (see City staff for contact information) regarding compliance or alternative solutions in meeting the ADA.



Owners of historic properties should comply to the fullest extent, while also preserving the integrity of the character-defining features of their buildings.



This historic warehouse building in Lower Downtown Denver, CO, added an elevator shaft to the outside of the building as one way to satisfy ADA requirements. Note that the addition is setback substantially from the facade and that it is a different material than the historic building.



A fixed metal canopy is permitted where evidence demonstrates that one existed during the building's period of significance.



When adding awnings to upper story windows, they should fit the opening and only the upper sash.

Awnings and Canopies

Historically, awnings and canopies have been a part of the Old Town District and using them in rehabilitation projects and new construction is encouraged.

79. Original canopies and awnings should be maintained when feasible.

- When replacement is necessary, or when adding canopies or awnings where none previously existed, use canopies or awnings similar to those seen traditionally on similar types of warehouse structures.
- Long, horizontal metal shed canopies were seen along ground floors, typically providing shelter for the loading dock(s).
- Some small, fabric awnings were seen in upper story windows. These fit the opening, typically covering only the upper sash.

80. A fixed metal canopy may be considered.

- Canopies are especially appropriate over exposed loading docks.
- Appropriate supporting mechanisms are wall-mounted brackets, chains and posts.

81. A fabric awning is also appropriate.

- Operable or fixed awnings are appropriate.
- Use colors that are compatible with the overall color scheme of the facade. Solid colors or simple muted striped patterns are appropriate.
- Simple shed shapes are appropriate for rectangular openings.

82. Internal illumination in an awning is inappropriate.

83. Mount an awning or canopy to accentuate character-defining features.

- It should be mounted to highlight moldings that may be found above the storefront and should not hide character-defining features.
- Its mounting should not damage significant features and historic details.

84. Contemporary interpretations of canopies and awnings, which are similar in scale and overall character to those seen historically, are encouraged.



A contemporary interpretation of a rigid metal awning may be considered.

Design for Energy Conservation

Many times historic elements on industrial structures are lost due to a misconception that old doors and windows are not energy efficient. For the most part historic structures were constructed to be naturally energy efficient (e.g. high ceilings permitted air circulation) and often times are more energy efficient than even the most “up-to-date” buildings.

85. The use of energy conservation methods in building design is encouraged.

- It is not always necessary to remove existing glass or to install thermopane glass to realize the energy savings. Generally, the problem is that older sash has dried and the glazing compound around it has shrunk, which allows air to leak around the glass.
- The best strategy is to re-glaze the existing glass and add weather-stripping. Storm windows may be installed on the interior side of windows. Be certain that the frame styles of the storm windows match those of the original windows.
- Weather-strip doors and windows.
- Install ceiling fans to circulate the air.



Simple shed shapes are appropriate for rectangular openings.

Landscaping



Landscaping elements should align with adjacent buildings and be compatible with the character of the neighborhood in size, scale, and type.

Landscaping will enhance the pedestrian experience and is therefore encouraged, especially where vacant lots and parking areas exist.

86. For open space on a site, define the edge of the property with landscape elements, when feasible.

- For example, define the edges of a vacant lot with landscaping (low-scale urban street trees or shrubs) or structural elements.
- Landscaping elements should align with adjacent buildings and be compatible with the character of the neighborhood in size, scale, and type. Free-form, suburban type landscaping is inappropriate in this setting.

Lighting

Lighting designs should enhance one's ability to interpret the historic character of the street, as seen at night, and should not overwhelm it.

87. Use lighting for the following:

- To accent architectural details.
- To accent building entries.
- To accent signs.
- To illuminate sidewalks.

88. Use lighting as it was used historically in the district.

- Shielded lighting is preferred.
- Lighting should not dominate a facade or the street.
- Washing the entire facade with light is inappropriate.

Mechanical Equipment and Service Utilities

89. Minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment.

- When feasible, use low-profile mechanical units on rooftops that are not visible from public ways.
- Screen equipment from view.
- Do not locate window air conditioning units or satellite dishes on the building's primary facade.

90. Minimize the visual impacts of utility connections and service boxes.

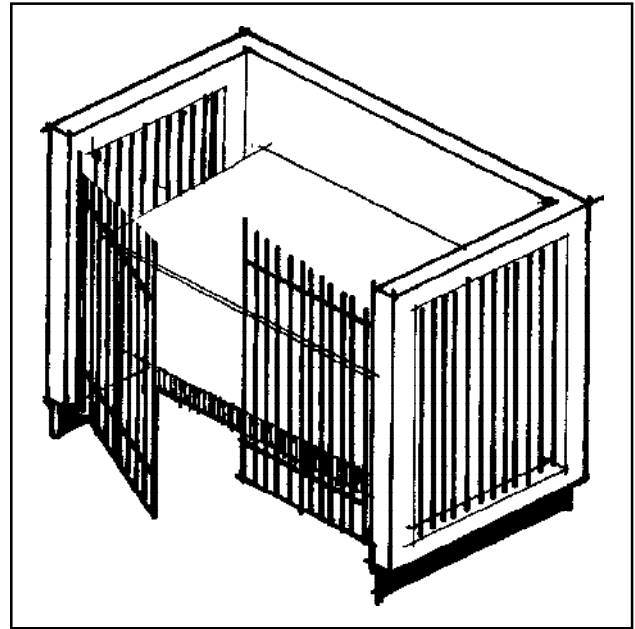
- Locate them on secondary walls when feasible.

91. Locate standpipes and other service equipment such that they will not damage historic facade materials.

- Cutting channels into facade materials damages the historic building fabric and is inappropriate.
- Avoid locating such equipment on the front of a building.

92. Minimize the visual impact of trash storage and service areas.

- Dumpsters should be screened from view.
- Locate service areas away from major pedestrian routes, typically in the rear.



Dumpsters should be screened from view.

Parking



Minimize visual impacts of off-street parking, as seen from the public way. This parking lot's edges are screened with planted areas, decorative paving, fences, hedges and decorative walls and would be appropriate in Old Town.



Minimize the visual impacts of a parking structure. This parking structure in Boulder, Colorado, reserved the street frontage for commercial uses, by "wrapping" parking at grade with a row of commercial spaces.

Automobiles have been a part of the scene for many years. However, their visual impacts should be minimized, to enable one to perceive the historic character of the street.

93. Minimize visual impacts of off-street parking as seen from the public way.

- Screen the edges of parking lots with planted areas, decorative paving, fences, hedges and decorative walls.
- When landscaping at the sidewalk edge use at least a five foot deep plant bed. This will provide a good buffer for pedestrians.
- Using a low brick wall may also be an appropriate solution.
- Landscaping the interior of a parking lot is encouraged.

94. Locate parking such that it will be subordinate to other site features.

- An on-site parking area should be located inside or behind a building, where its visual impact will be minimized.
- Minimize the surface area of paving and consider using less impervious material such as modular pavers.

95. Minimize the visual impacts of a parking structure.

- Cars in a parking structure should be screened from view from the street.
- Street frontage should be reserved for commercial uses. This may be accomplished by locating the parking below grade, with commercial space above, or by "wrapping" parking at grade with a row of commercial spaces.
- Design a parking structure so as to allow space for active uses of the sidewalk.

Security Devices

96. Minimize the visual impact of security devices.

- New security bar designs should be simple.
- Locating bars inside the glass of a display window is the only acceptable place.
- Roll-down metal screens are discouraged, because they obscure products on display and thereby weaken the interest of the street to pedestrians when in a closed position.
- Minimize the visual impacts of alarm devices and intercom panels.

97. Gates may be installed at storefront entries.

- Set them back from the storefront line, when feasible, to maintain the appearance of a recessed entry.
- Where entries were not recessed historically, consider installing gates on the inside of the door.



Minimize the visual impacts of utility connections and service boxes. Locate them on secondary walls when feasible. Seeing this mechanical conduit on the building face is inappropriate.